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AT the Instance of many *Eminent* Persons of both *Churches*, Superiours are consenting that, of the *English* Sermons Preach'd before Their Majesties since the First *Sunday* of *October* last, some be made Publick. And because that which open'd the Preaching at *Windsor* has been much desir'd, and the longest expected, I Present the Reader with it in the *First* place. The Author bids me Apologize for it as a slight Thing run up in haste; But since it was well receiv'd, it would be to question the Judgment of that most Honorable and most Learned Auditory, to make any Excuse, or to give it you with any Alterations or Amendment. You have it therefore as it was spoke, and will be follow'd by others of the same Hand, he hopes, more Correct.

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The First
S E R M O N
Preach'd before Their
M A J E S T I E S
In English
A T
W I N D S O R,
On the First *Sunday* of *October* 1685.

By the Reverend Father *Dom. P. E.* Monk of the
Holy Order of *St. Benedict*, and of the *English*
Congr.

L O N D O N,
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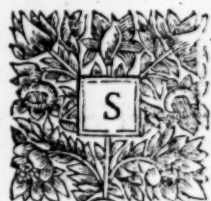
THE FIRST
SERMON

Preach'd before Their
MAJESTIES

On the First Sunday of October 1685.

Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex toto
corde tuo, & in tota anima tua, & in
tota mente tua. *Matth. 22. 37.*

*Thou shalt love thy Lord thy God with all thy
heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy
mind. Matth. 22. 37.*



Aint *Augustine* relates of him- S. Aug. Con-
fess. l. 8. c. 12.
self (most Sacred Majesty) that being in great perplex-
ity of mind, and agitation
of his thoughts ; his Reason
at war with it self, inventing Arguments
for, and against the speedy amendment of

his Life, a suddain gust of Sorrow swell'd his Heart, and while that was spending it self in a flood of Tears, he heard an unexpected Voice, *Tolle, lege, Take up the Book, and Read.* He open'd the Holy Scripture, as it were by chance, but casting his Eye upon such words, as at the same time search'd and cur'd the ulcer in his Heart; he was oblig'd to acknowledg the Finger of God pointing them out to him, and embracing the happy opportunity, he took that resolution upon the place, which turn'd a witty but loose young Man into one of the greatest Doctors and most Saintly persons that ever illustrated the Church of God.

The Application will not be difficult to those that consider the temper of this Age, which seems to revive the Parts of St. *Augustine* in Men of the most piercing Judgments, of the brightest Invention, of the smoothest and most eloquent Expression; but Men, for the most part, whose Excesses and Corruption run as high as their Wit; Who wanting not boldness to follow him thro' all the dark Mazes of a sinful Life, the
mean

mean time as uneasie in themselves, and as dissatisfi'd with their present Condition, yet shake hands with him and fall back when he shews them by Example the noblest trial of a *thoro' courage*, and the soundest proof of *good sence*; *Repentance*. But that there may be as great a proportion in the Means of their Conversion, as there is resemblance in their Lives, the Divine Wisdom which has the *Hearts of Kings in his hands*, and turns them like Water, has made those of your Sacred Majesties so pliant and yielding to the Necessities of your People, that you are graciously condescending to have them awaken'd with a Voice that was never yet heard within these Walls. I mean the *ancient Religion* St. George's Chappel. of this Kingdom calling upon them in their native Language, and even this Day, if *they harden not their hearts*, they shall *hear what will make for their peace*. For tho' it has pleas'd the Almighty to judge the Cause, and assert the Right of his *Representative upon Earth*, to settle you upon the Hereditary Throne of your Ancestors, and lay your Enemies in the dust; yet there
is

4 Reg. 20.
19.

is still a *Peace* behind *which the World cannot give*, and Kings and Queens cannot otherwise promote, then by exhibiting themselves, as at this Day, the *Nursing Fathers* and *Nursing Mothers* of the Church; then by encouraging *Piety* and countenancing *Religion* by Word and Example; *Ut sit Pax & Veritas*, that Truth as well as Peace may be the Guardian of the Throne, and Happiness of the Subject. This is what *St Augustine* calls *Regem de duplici Regno*, to be more then a single King, to double the lustre of your sacred Temples, while your Interests are inseparable from those of God, and the Equity, Justice, and Clemency of your Reign, so merit the Hearts and Affection of Your People, as to confine them not to your own Breast; but as the Angels do our Prayers, to carry them towards the Sovereign King, that they may *love him with all their heart, with all their soul, and with all their mind*. Words not of my own choice, but put into my Mouth by the *Church* to entertain you with this Day, her unerring Assistant the Holy Ghost wisely providing, this *First Commandment*

ment shou'd be the Subject of your *First Attention*, and to confound those who *feign labour* and difficulty in the Precepts of the Gospel, commands me to shew, that *as there is nothing more easie then love*, so a *well-order'd love is all that is requir'd at your hands*. This I shall endeavour by the assistance of Him who is eternal and *subsisting Love*, and which I hope to obtain by the Intercession of His Blessed Mother, who *came to shed this sacred fire upon the earth*. Luc. 12. 49.

Indeed I cannot without reluctance take off your thoughts from attending on the Triumph of this Day, which the Holy Church has set apart to render her grateful Acknowledgments to the Lord of Hosts, for that memorable Victory obtain'd at Sea against the Enemies of the *Christian Name*. Where the *Blessed Mother of God* was the *Moses* whose lifted-up Hands, fervent Prayer and Intercession, prevail'd, at once over the far greater Strength of the *Turks*, and over Sins of the *Christians*. But this is too vast a Subject to be reduc'd within the limits of a

Victory of Lepanto, in memory of which the principal Solemnity of the *Rosary* is assign'd to the first Sunday of October.

B

short

S. Aug. Paf.
 fim crede ut
 intelligas.
 Tr. 29. in
 Joan.

short Discourse ; and I shou'd be oblig'd to say such glorious things of this City of God, the Protectrix and Bulwark of the Church, that *nisi credideritis non intelligetis* ; such of my Auditors as do not believe cannot understand. Wherefore in these Circumstances the Behaviour of St. Paul to the *Corinthians* ought (in my judgment) to be a standing Rule to all *Preachers*, to fit their Doctrine to the capacity of the *Hearers*, it being more pardonable to deprive the well-prepar'd and healthful Stomachs of some degree of Nourishment, then that the weaker shou'd be overcharg'd and offended with solid and wholsom Food, but such as yet they cannot digest :

1 Cor. 3. 2. *Lac vobis potum dedi non escam ; nondum enim poteratis, sed nec nunc quidem potestis : I have fed you with Milk, and not with Meat ; for hitherto you were not able to bear it, neither yet are you able.* Wherefore leaving the Mysteries of the Holy Rosary to the private Devotion of every one that is penetrated with the love of Mary, let us beg her Intercession, that I may speak worthily of that which was the

CROWN

*crow*n of all her Vertues, and principally qualifi'd her to become the Mother of God, while the Angel Saluted her, saying, *Ave Maria.*

THE Holy *Evangelist* in this Chapter records three nice and labour'd Questions which the *Pharisees* and *Sadducees* put to our Blessed Redeemer, with a design to take advantage of his Answers, very confident they shou'd convince him either of Impiety or Ignorance, or at least expose him to the Indignation of the People, which wou'd serve their turn as well. The First Question was *Practical*; *Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar?* The Second meerly *Speculative*, concerning the Nature and Affections of a glorifi'd Body. The Third touching *Matter of Fact*, *Which is the first and greatest commandment in the law?* But these malicious Proposals gave our Blessed Master occasion to clear three important Difficulties; And in the First place, not only to exempt the Prince from Injustice in demanding Tribute, but also to declare the paying of it to be a matter of Consci-

ence, and point of Duty in the Subject. Next he disperses the gross and carnal Idea which the *Jews* then had, and corrupted Nature is ready enough to suggest touching the Appetites and Inclinations of humane Bodies in another Life : and then concludes with declaring the great *Legal* as well as *Evangelical* Precept of the love of God ; *Hoc est maximum & primum mandatum*. In order to the Examination whereof, I beg leave to consider Three things ;

I. The state of the Question , and whence the Difficulty arises, *Quod est mandatum magnum ?*

II. The Answer , why the Precept of Dilection is stil'd *First* and *Greatest*?

III. And lastly, The nature and extent of the Precept, *With all thy heart, &c.*

I. The Question ; which seems to carry so little difficulty with it, and to lie so open to the meanest capacity, that the Resolution could no more evidence the profound

found Learning of the Respondent, then a catechistical Answer of a vulgar Catholick to the number of the Sacraments or Commandments might qualifie him to Commence Doctor. For was it not as obvious to the *Jew*, as it is now to the *Christian*, that God is the *final happiness* of Man, the soveraign good, and by necessary consequence, that the Precept which exacts our love of him, must needs be the basis and foundation of the rest, the *first* and *greatest* of all? How comes it then to pass, that the *Pharisees*, who were continually beating their Brains upon the Criticisms of the Law; and spinning fine Threds which could never be of any use to them, unless *to insnare Jesus in his words*; Who to that end were contented to advise with their profess'd Enemies, the *Sadducees*, and came warm from Dispute, and big with selected Queries: How chanc'd they to stumble upon such a Question as naturally begat another in reference to themselves, Whether their *Ignorance* or their *Envy* was their *first* and *greatest* Crime? Whether their *Envy* blinded their Understanding, or their

want

want of Understanding expos'd them to such a brutal and violent Passion?

This face (B. C.) it bears at the first sight; but if we draw the Prospect nearer, we shall find a great deal of artifice in the *Proposition*, and difficulty in the *Resolution*; and that it partakes of the nature of a curious Picture, which to a distant view discovers only confus'd Layings of Colours, but when the nearer Eye begins to examine each Proportion, and run over every Lineament and Feature, it is not easie to determine whether the curious Spectator more admire his own precipitate Judgment, or the Ingenuity of the Painter. For *Origen*, who was excellently versed in the *Rabinical* or *Jewish* Theology, assures us, that the Doctors of the Synagogue agreed in the *number* of the Precepts contain'd in their Law, but never in the *order* of them; and while they generally admitted 613, some of greater, others of lesser importance, they were at perpetual variance, even to his time, concerning the disposition of them, *quid prius, quidve posterius*, so far were they from ranging them *methodically*,
much

*Origen in
hunc locum.*

(II)

much further from deciding which of that multitude was to be fix'd in the head of the rest.

And as to the Precept before us, they had no warrant from the holy Text to assign it the first place, since it was deliver'd among the latest, in the last Book of the Law, and no sooner then in the sixth Chapter of the Recapitulation of it, that is in *Deuteronomy*.

And to increase the difficulty, the *Pharisees* propound the Question not only concerning the *greatest*, but also concerning the *first*; for tho' *S. Matthew* in my Text fixes it only upon the *Great Commandment*, yet *St. Mark* assigns it to the *First*; and *Marc. 12.* from our Blessed Saviours Reply, it seems ^{31.} clear that the Proposal comprehended as well the one as the other.

Wherefore in the Question, Wit and Deceit, Sophistry and Learning are woven together: For taking the words conjoyn'tly, *What is the first and greatest*, the Question is wholly captious and sophistical in the Proponent: For the *Pharisees* thought that there was no one and the same Precept both
first

first and greatest, all of them seeming to be deliver'd confusedly, or according as necessity requir'd. 2ly. If the Sentence be sever'd into two, *What is the first*, and *What is the greatest*, the Question is very knotty, and was to the Jewish *Rabbies* what many of the highest Metaphysical Abstractions are to our Modern *Schoolmen*, an unexhausted Subject of Study to the Masters, and of Dispute among the Scholars.

Prov. 21.
30.

But as the Prophet long before alledg'd, whilst he dehorts bold and rash Man from tempting the Divinity, *Non est sapientia, non est prudentia, non est consilium contra Dominum*; *There is no wisdom*, (that's for their Learning) *There is no prudence*, (the original word signifies *craft*) *There is no counsel*, there is no Plotting (*non est consilium*) against the Almighty. For *Jesus Christ*, who as the eternal Wisdom of his Father, was himself the *Law-giver*, and therefore the best *Interpreter* of the Law, at the same time to instruct and humble the Understandings of those half-learned, but thro'ly proud Men, declares in exprefs terms, that there is a *first* and *greatest* Commandment ;

ment ; And 2ly. That it is what they were the least willing to admit for such ; *Thou shalt love thy Lord God*, obliquely impeaching them at the same time of the want of that love, while out of envy and malice they came to oppress their *Messias* with insnaring Questions. This for the Question ; now

II. We come to consider the Answer, and why the Precept of Dilection is stil'd *Primum & Maximum*, the *First* and *Greatest*.

And surely that must needs be the *First Commandment* to which all the other are but subservient, as Means to the End ; or Ministerial, as Instruments to the Work ; or issuing from it, as Rivulets from the Fountain.

The Law is the Summary or Collection of all the Precepts. And if we inquire what is the end of the Law, the Apostle acquaints us, that *Finis Præcepti Caritas*, 1 Tim. 1. 5. *Charity is the end of the Precept* : And if it be the end of every Precept, and as it were the Centre where all the Lines meet, it is the end of the Law, as elsewhere he expresses, *Qui diligit, Legem implevit* ; Therefore it is the end of every

C
Vertue,

Vertue, and of every good and perfect gift
that descends from the Father of lights. And
 accordingly the Holy Moses in *Deuteronomy*
 making repetition of the Law, analyseth all
 the Precepts, and draws them to this only
 Head, of loving God and of serving him
 (which is the proof of Love) *with all your*
heart, and with all your soul. Si ergo abedieritis
mandatis meis, quæ ego hodie præcipio vobis,
ut diligatis Dominum Deum vestrum, &c. And
 his Successor *Josue. Hoc tantum diligentissime*
præcavete, ut diligatis Dominum Deum ve-
strum; Only (or principally) take care of this,
that you love your Lord God; Which S. Aug.
without doubt, alluded to, when he utter'd
that memorable Sentence, Dilige, & fac quod
vis; Love, and do what you will: For as the A-
postle says, Dilectio malum non operatur;
Love restrains us from committing any crime,
and thence concludes, Ergo plenitudo legis
est dilectio; Therefore the fulfilling of the
law is loving.

Deut. 11.
 13.

Chap. 23.
 11.

Aug. in E-
 pist. Joan.
 cap. 7.

Rom. 13.

II. If Love be the First Precept, because
 it is the end of the Law; it is the Greatest,
 because in it consists our final Beatitude.
 The spiritual growth of Man is aptly com-
 par'd

par'd by holy Writers to the raising of a Structure : many Hands, and much Labour ; many Instruments, and much Art ; many Ladders, Scaffolds, Engines, and Materials are necessary before the Work be brought to perfection : but when the Building is finish'd, and the last Hand taken off, the Scaffolds must down, the Tools and Engines are laid by, the remaining Materials must be removed ; and what was requisite while the Foundation was laying, while the Building was rising, must now be carry'd off as indecent to the Eye, and offensive to the Inhabitant. Thus it fares with those who, in the Language of the Royal Prophet, *lay Ascensions in their* Psal. 83. 6. *hearts*, heap one vertuous Practice upon another, and follow on that with a third, till, as by several Stages of the spiritual Building, they arrive to the finishing Point, *to see the God of Gods in Sion*. Then all the Vertues which were Instrumental and Ministerial to that end, are of no longer use : we throw them by with the state of Mortality ; and cast them from us, as no longer Helps but Impediments. For what Vertue

Psal. 110.

1 John 4
18.2 Pet. 10.
1. 19.2 Cor. 13.
12.

2 Cor. 2. 9.

in this Life so necessary to advance us towards the Happiness of the next, as the *Fear of God*, so often stil'd *The beginning of wisdom* ? but *Perfect charity casts out fear*. What so essential to a Christian as *Faith*, upon which depends the *Promises of the life which now is, and that which is to come* ? yet it is only a *Candle shining in an obscure place, till the morning star rise in our hearts, chasing darkness from every corner, dispersing the cloud between us and the Divinity* ; For *We shall see him no more, Per speculum in ænigmate*, thro' a Glass, and as it were in a Riddle, but as he is in himself, *face to face*. What so necessary to Salvation as relieving the Poor, defending the Cause of the Widow and Orphan, forgiving Injuries, praying for our Enemies, bridling our Passions ? But to that happy State all necessity is foreign, where every one drinks of the Torrent of ineffable Pleasure, Affliction can never approach, Enemies are not to be found, Concupiscence is no more. O thou Father of mercies, and God of all consolation ! how amiable are thy *Tabernacles* ? For the eye has
not

not seen, nor the ear heard, nor can it enter into the heart of man, how comprehensive, and never-failing a Happiness thou hast prepar'd ! But for whom hast thou prepar'd it ? for those that *seek vanity and love a lye,* the false and glittering Joys of this Life, which may amuse, but can never fill ? No ; their place shall be with the Hypocrites, because they love to be deceived, and shut their Eyes lest they should see the slippery Precipice where they are standing, I should say, whence they are falling. Is it for them then that add Heap to Heap, Field to Field, and to whom there is no end of their Acquisition, at least of their Desires ? No ; their love is their weight, *Amor tuus St. Aug. pondus tuum,* it bears them downwards ; the Earth they loved shall be their Portion, *they shall descend into the inferiour parts of it.* Is it for those that will not take the Almighty's Word that he has laid up Pleasures for them, but impiously as well as childishly strive to anticipate their Happiness, by laying hold on the first they see, those vile and impure ones which the World and the Flesh tender them ? But
nothing

Apoc. 21:
27.

Nothing unclean can enter there; and those that will have the Paradice of a *Mahomet* in this Life, shall share his Torment in the next. For whom therefore are these Pleasures in store? ah! *Diligentibus se*, for those, and only those that love him. Faith shall vanish, Prophecies shall be vacated, Tongues and Sermons shall cease, *Sed charitas nunquam excidit*; Divine Love, like its Object, endures for ever.

1 Cor. 13.
2.

And this brings us upon the Third and last Consideration, the *Extent of the Precept*; *Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo, & in tota anima tua, & in tota mente tua*; Words at which the Heart of

Hebr. 4. 12.

Man shrinks; Words more piercing than a two-edged sword, penetrating to the division of the soul and the spirit; Words that may justly strike the Sinner with terror, and make

Job 9. 28.

even the Just cry out with holy *Job*, *Verebar omnia opera mea*; I fear and apprehend all my works, lest when they come to be weighed in this *Ballance of the Sanctuary*, they should be found too light. And tho' Almighty God by inforcing the Precept with so many almost synonymous Words, intended

intended principally to sink this *First* and *Greatest Commandment* deeper into our hearts, yet it has produc'd so contrary an effect, even in the Minds of Learned Men, that some have not wanted confidence to pronounce the Commandment impossible. Indeed, if he that lays it upon us did not withal promise us strength to perform it, *Pelagius* and his Followers wou'd never have been condemn'd for that Doctrine. But since our Divine Master has told us, that *His yoke is easie, and his burden light*; and the beloved Disciple, *that His commandments are not grievous*; Matth. 11. 30. 1 John 5. 3. it not a Prodigy, that under the Gospel this shou'd appear so difficult to us, who are incompass'd with those Divine Fires which *Jesus brought upon the Earth*, and live under a Law which commands nothing but Love, says *St. Augustine*; *Lex nova nihil nisi amorem jubet*; Especially since this is not one of those Precepts whose perfection was reserv'd till the new Law, but is equally inforc'd upon *Jew* and *Christian*.

For *Moses* presses this with no less energy
of

Deut. 6. 1,
2, 5.

of words upon that stiff-neck'd and stony-hearted People, then *Jesus Christ*, who gives what he commands; for in the fore-cited Chapter of *Deuteronomy*, the Prophet says that God lays all those Injunctions upon them, to try whether they love him *in toto corde & tota anima*; and again, *Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo, & ex tota anima tua, & ex tota fortitudine tua*, with thy whole strength; a word of greater force then *ex tota mente*, with all thy mind. But *St. Mark* puts an Equivalent, *ex tota virtute*, with all thy strength or power.

S. Basil. Reg.
Fus. q. 2.

For as to the substance of the Precept, no rational Creature can dispute the verity of *St. Basil's* Doctrine, *That the love of God is not a thing to be taught*; for if we have not any need of instruction to learn that we are to be pleas'd with Life, to love Health, and what is agreeable to our Nature, to affect those that are instrumental to our Being, or concurring to our better Life, our Education; we have far more reason to believe that Nature her self is the only Mistress in this Point, and that in the first moment the rational Soul enters the
Body,

the Body, the reasonable Faculty finds in it self an inclination to love God: 'Tis a Debt that we are indispensibly oblig'd to pay him, and the greatest misery that can happen to a Soul, is to be insensible of the Obligation.

If the Obligation therefore be evident, that 'tis our Duty to love God, the *modus rei*, or manner of doing it cannot found any new difficulty: For we are not to learn that we love nothing but as far as it is good, either in it self, or in the value we have of it. *Goodness* therefore is the *measure* of Love, and we enlarge or restrain our affection to a Thing, according as we discover more or fewer degrees of goodness in the Object; And since the perfection of every created Thing is bounded and determinate, the degree of love must be commensurate to the Thing beloved, or the affection exceeds the merit. And since God is the Source and Fountain of all goodness, immense, increated and infinite, the Heart ought to be carry'd upon God with an infinite love. True indeed, the Action cannot exceed the Faculty acting; and an

D

infinite

infinite Affection cannot issue from a limited Capacity; yet the Heart is ungrateful and disloyal, if it give not it self the full reins and scope of its activity : And this is to love God *with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind, and with all our strength* ; *Quantum scis, quantum potes, quantum vales.* Let us consider each Clause apart.

We love God *with all our heart*, when we approach unto him by the motion of the Heart, that is, when we adhere to him by Affection and Prayer.

We love him *with all our mind*, when our thoughts are taken up with the meditation of heavenly Things, when he is the principal Object of our Thoughts, when his Divine Perfections, Benefits and reveal'd Truths, are the exercise of our Understanding.

We love him *with all our soul*, when we have God before our eyes in the use of all the Faculties of our Souls, and both the outward and inward Man unite and conspire in his Service.

We love him *with all our strength*, when
we

we serve him with a right intention in all the Duties he requires at our hands, and keeping even the *least* of his Commandments as religiously as the *greatest*, we propose him as the only end of all our Actions. *Si diligitis me, mandata mea servate*, John 14. 15. If you love me, keep my Commandments. Commandments so closely knit and woven together, that *Qui in uno offendit*, He that allows himself in any one *Crime*, he that dispenses with himself in any one *Duty*, becomes guilty of violating the whole; because he has broken the Tie of union, because he has withdrawn his Affection: *For you cease to Love, when you cease to Obey.*

James 2. 10.

Hence I shall make one or two Inferences, and conclude.

1. That this Commandment is not fulfill'd by a meer external Obedience, a literal compliance with the Laws of God and the Church; or by outward Exercises of Piety that strike the Eye, Fasting, Mortifications, &c. For the Love of God is wholly *interiour*; and tho' it break forth into sensible Practices, 'tis the Heart only that Loves. When the Heart do's not ac-

company those Actions, they are inanimate and fruitless : And the Heart do's not Cooperate, when it do's not Love.

For what opinion wou'd you have of a *Courtier*, that after a thousand particular Favours, and most endearing Instances of Esteem, shou'd bluntly tell his *Royal Benefactor*, I will obey you in all things, and execute your Commands to a tittle ; but I cannot feel in my Heart the least sense of Gratitude, or the least affection for your Royal Person ? Wou'd you not be ready to impeach him of the most brutish Insensibility, and condemn him to be for ever effac'd out of the memory of his Prince ? and can you judge more favourably of a *Christian*, that being indebted to *Jesus Christ* the King of Kings, of whose *Fulness* he receives all he has, of whose Bounty he holds his Being, his Life, his Subsistence, his Salvation ; and yet sits down contented with paying him only a cold *legal* Obedience, *Timore pœnæ, non amore justitiæ* ? complying exteriorly with his Commands ; And indeed, keeping the *Letter* of his Law, but without endeavouring after any sense of his

St. Aug.
Passim.

his Benefits, love of his Person, or of the Law which he servilely obeys? Why are you less impartial to this *unprofitable servant* than to the other, unless because *Tues* 2 Kings 12. 7. *ille vir*, as *Nathan* upon the like occasion appropriated to King *David*, *You your self are the man*, and are guilty of the same Crime in a higher measure? Have you not read, that after the promulgation of the new Law, the *true worshippers shall* John 4. 23. *adore the Father in spirit and truth*? 'Tis the excellence of the Gospel, wherein it surpasses the ancient Alliance. And *S. Augustine* teaches us, that God is not worshipped but by loving. *Deus non colitur nisi amando.* Aug. lib. 10. de Civ. Dei cap. 4.

2ly. I infer, That as it is impossible to arrive to the End without making use of the necessary Means; as 'tis impossible to fly without Wings, or to go to any term of place without passing the middle distance: So 'tis impossible to arrive at the love of God but by the love of our Neighbour. *Diliges proximum, &c. Secundum simile est huic.* Our Blessed Master assimilates the second Commandment to the first, not
in

in reference to the *Objects*, which are infinitely unlike, but as to the *necessity*, the one leading to the other, and being both *first* in their kinds : The love of God first in the Line of Precept and Obligation ; but the love of our Neighbour first in Execution.

*Aug. Tr. 17.
in Joan.*

Dilectio Dei prior est ordine præcipiendi , proximi dilectio prior est ordine faciendi. We do not indeed refer the love we bear Almighty God to our Neighbour, yet when you come to practice, we shew to what degree we love God by exhibiting charitable Offices to our Neighbour. For as he has made the reciprocal love we bear the one to the other, the distinctive Sign and Badge of a Christian, *In this they shall know you to be my disciples , if you love one another ;* So has he appointed the love of our Neighbour to be a *Signaculum Clausum*, a private Index to our selves, and, as it were, a Water-mark to our own Hearts, to discover by it how much the love of God ebbs or flows within us. *He that says he loves God, and yet hates his brother, is a liar.* And thro' all the course of the *New Testament* he urges this fraternal Charity with

*1 John 4.
20.*

with so much earnestness, that he would seem to postpone the love of *Himself* to that of our *Brethren*, were it not certain, that the *Brotherly love is the only way to the Divine*. So St. Paul, Gal. 5. 14. *For all the law is fulfill'd in one word, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy self; Omnis enim lex, in uno sermone impletur, diliges proximum tuum sicut teipsum.* And again Rom. 13. 8. *Qui diligit proximum legem implevit; He that loves his neighbour has fulfill'd the law.*

Ah ! Christian, deceive not thy self, thou mayst easily impose upon thy own Heart in the love of God ; the trials of which do not so often occur, and when they do, *Nature* and *Education* take up the better half. 'Tis a thing indeed we all have frequently in our Mouths, we are perswaded we have it in our Hearts, while at the same time we find some reason to doubt whether we have that *Charity* we ought for our Neighbour ; nay, while we actually harbour malice and envy in our heart, while we are murdering our Neighbour by Detraction , while we are committing violence upon his Person or his Goods,

if

if any one shou'd interrogate us of the love of God, we shou'd take it for a great Affront to have it so much as call'd in question. But so it is, *Mentita est iniquitas sibi; Iniquity lies to it self*: And that Argument of the beloved Disciple invincibly concludes all unjust and uncharitable Men, *If you do not love your brother whom you see, how can you love God that you do not see?* How can you reverence the Prototype, and prophane his Image? How can you respect the Master, and lay violent hands on the Servant? How can you honour the King, and at the same time condemn his Officers? *Mentita est iniquitas sibi.*

*Aug. lib. de.
sp. & anim.
cap. 36.*

I will sum up all that has been said in those excellent words of S. Augustine; *Amat nos Deus ut ametur, &c.* God loves us, to the end that he may be loved again; And when he bestows his Affection upon us, he expects only the return of his own Gift, *Cum amat nihil aliud vult quam amari*; knowing that his Love is the sovereign Happiness of those that enjoy it: For to love sovereign Good is sovereign Felicity; since

since the love of Goodness makes Men good, and Goodness is Happiness ; *Si bonus, ergo beatus. A good tree cannot bring forth bad fruit.* Wherefore when the love of God is the root of our Actions ; our Words, our Conversation, and all our Practices *Amorem redolent*, breath forth the sweet odour of the Holy Spirit. But because humane Affection, good Education, and the Formalities of Religion do often put on the mask of divine Love, the Divinity has impress'd his Seal upon fraternal Charity ; *In this they shall know that you are my disciples, they that will not believe it upon any other account, si diligitis invicem, If you love one another.* Math. 7. 17. John 13. 35.

But God has bestow'd on you a rational Soul to know this Truth, and a flexible Will to reduce it to Practice, and you bid defiance to him with his own Weapons : You do not only condemn his Commandment, but do it with that frightful Aggravation, that you pretend reason for your Contempt. You make it a piece of Wit to disobey, as if Religion were not calculated for Men of Parts. You feign labour in the

E Precept,

- Precept, and shew your liberty to do good only in a free election of evil. But the Decree of the Holy Ghost pronounc'd by the Mouth of the Preacher, shall never be revers'd, *Non salvabit impietas impium.* The deordinate love of Creatures (which constitutes all the Sins we commit) can never make the Sinner happy; because *there is no peace to the wicked, says my God.* He may dissemble the torment of his Conscience, but *his worm shall never die*: he shall ever and anon feel the gnawing and gripes of an irregular Love. Let him plunge himself never so deep in Pleasures, he can never stifle his Remorses; His Honey is mixt with Gall, *his Wine is imbitter'd with Wormwood, Uva eorum, uva fellis, &c.* In a word, let him commit as many fresh Crimes as he pleases, to escape reflecting on the old, it is decreed that Sin shall ever be the punishment of Sin. As his Affections wander after new Idols, they meet with new Torments, till this miserable Soul, quite tir'd in the ways of Iniquity, becomes like the Deemon in the Gospel, *Walking through dry places, seeking rest, and finding none.*

Then

(31)

Then he is ready to fall into the account of *S. Augustine's* experience, and to cry out *St. Aug. in Conf. & S. liloq.* with him, *O Divine Love, which I have known too late, from which I have wander'd too long! to turn away from thee, is to fall; to return unto thee, is to rise; to embrace and remain in thee, is to stand firm and happy.*

Divine Love! which no one loses without misery, no one seeks after without success, no one recovers without pardon!

To swerve from thy strait, but easie paths, is all we call *Sin*; to reenter into them, is all we stile *Vertue*; to be depriv'd of thee for ever, is the true Definition of *Hell*; as to enjoy thee for ever, is the essential Glory of *Heaven*. Whither I beseech Him to conduct us, who has furnish'd us with such easie and efficacious Means, *The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.*

F I N I S.